

VZCZCXRO4047  
OO RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHDBU #0178/01 0271025  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 271025Z JAN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6544  
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1342  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1376  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1381  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1311  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1252  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1343  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1285  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1248  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1144  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM FP MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1398  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0917  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 1431  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 7629

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 000178

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CACEN, EUR/RUS, DRL  
NSC FOR MERKEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/27/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PROP](#) [KDEM](#) [RS](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PROTESTS SECURITY MINISTRY CRACK-DOWN ON NDI

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard E. Hoagland, Ambassador, EXEC, Embassy  
Dushanbe.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On January 27, the Ambassador forcefully protested to Foreign Minister Nazarov the Security Ministry's recent crackdown on the National Democratic Institute in Dushanbe. Nazarov agreed to intervene with the Minister of Security and to bring the problem to President Rahmonov's attention. We will follow this closely until the issues are resolved. END SUMMARY.

#### BACKGROUND

¶2. (C) In the wake of the "color revolutions" and propaganda from Moscow that U.S. democracy NGOs in cahoots with intelligence agencies fomented them, the Government of Tajikistan reined in National Democratic Institute (NDI). The Ministry of Justice, reportedly on instructions from the Ministry of Security, has consistently refused to register NDI, and AmCit directors have been unable to obtain visas, except for brief visits for internal management reviews. Nevertheless, NDI continued to work in Tajikistan with CIS-citizen directors and worked openly with all legal political parties, including President Rahmonov's Peoples Democratic Party. Current NDI Director Gegham Sargsyan, an Armenian citizen, regularly renewed his accreditation with the Ministry of Interior's Office of Visa and Foreign Registration (OVIR) to live and work in Tajikistan.

¶3. (C) When Sargsyan's residency registration was due to expire in January, OVIR refused to renew it because he worked for an international NGO. They advised him to go to the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Ministry's Consular Section declined to register him as well, because the Ministry of Justice has not

registered NDI. On January 23, the Ambassador raised this issue with Foreign Minister Nazarov, who said he would look into it. On January 24, the Ambassador again raised the problem with First Deputy Foreign Minister Yatimov, who suggested that NDI needs to be legally registered but agreed to consult with Foreign Minister Nazarov.

14. (C) On January 26, Sargsyan asked to see the Ambassador urgently. With an expired residency registration, he is now technically in Tajikistan illegally. He had gone to the Foreign Ministry three times, to no avail, and he feared he could be arrested if he stayed much longer. Further, he reported that Ministry of Security officers have been severely harassing his local staff, both program and technical support workers like drivers, calling them to rooms in the Hotel Tajikistan and intensively interrogating them to "reveal NDI's secrets." Security Ministry officials have also been calling family members of NDI employees and their professors, if they are students, threatening "consequences" if the employees do not cooperate.

THIS MUST STOP

15. (C) The Ambassador asked urgently to see Foreign Minister Nazarov at OOB on January 27. He noted that he had reluctantly accepted the previous "compromise" allowing NDI to remain unregistered and without AmCit directors but continuing to work. However, it appears that compromise has now broken down. Further, it is outrageous and unacceptable that the Ministry of Security is pressuring the Tajik citizens who work at NDI. This is reminiscent of the KGB excesses of the Soviet Period. While this is now unfortunately the norm in Uzbekistan, it is unworthy for Tajikistan to behave like this. The Ambassador reminded the Foreign Minister that NDI has a powerful constituency in Washington, and Tajikistan's actions against this organization

DUSHANBE 00000178 002 OF 002

risk harming the generally positive U.S.-Tajikistan relationship.

16. (C) The Ambassador added he is aware that Moscow is leading the charge against Western democracy and human rights organizations and, further, seeks to limit the U.S. presence in Tajikistan. Dushanbe should not fall into this trap. We know that President Rahmonov's foreign policy is "open-door," but continued harassment of NDI is slamming the door on U.S. fingers. Tajikistan certainly cannot want that perception. The Ambassador appealed to Foreign Minister Nazarov to help him solve this problem.

MAYBE ROGUES ARE OVER-FULFILLING THE PLAN?

17. (C) Nazarov responded that he would contact Minister of Security Abdurahimov immediately to ask what was going on. He also said that he would bring the issue to President Rahmonov's attention. He was sure there would be a solution in the coming week. Nazarov commented that sometimes individual officials "over-fulfill the plan," to try to curry favor with their bosses. It could be that rogue officers were behind the NDI problems. To illustrate this, he recounted that several years ago, a Ministry of Security officer had invited "a young woman from the British Embassy" to the Foreign Ministry and had "questioned her inappropriately." When Nazarov found out about this, he'd raised hell with the Minister of Security and put a stop to it. Nazarov assured the Ambassador that harassment of NDI is not Government of Tajikistan policy, and he stated explicitly, "OVIR is violating the law."

18. (C) Nazarov volunteered that the recent problem with BBC losing its license to broadcast from Dushanbe was a result of unilateral - and illegal - action by the new director of radio and television broadcasting. This kind of freelancing causes international problems for Tajikistan, and the President is well aware of it.

19. (C) Three hours after the meeting, Foreign Minister Nazarov telephoned the Ambassador. He said he'd spoken with Minister of

Security Abdurahimov who denied any knowledge of the NDI issue but said he would speak with his officers to get to the bottom of the problem. The Ambassador thanked Nazarov for his quick action at a very busy time, but reminded him that the problem has to be solved, not just looked into.

¶10. (C) COMMENT: NDI's problems in Dushanbe coincide more or less with the recent "British spy scandal" in Moscow and President Putin directly linking Western espionage to democracy and human rights NGOs. We note that intelligence officers from the Russian Embassy have nearly free run at the Ministry of Security. By making a forceful protest to the Foreign Minister, who will undoubtedly inform President Rahmonov, we hope that NDI in Dushanbe can return to the status quo ante. However, we will watch closely and not let up the pressure until Sargsyan is legally registered and harassment against NDI's Tajik employees stops. END COMMENT  
HOAGLAND